



State of Tennessee  
Department of State  
**Tennessee State Library and Archives**  
403 Seventh Avenue North  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

**SUMMERVILLE, JAMES (MELVIN SMITH)**  
**(1947- )**  
**PAPERS**  
**1975-1986**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The James Summerville (James Melvin Smith) Papers, 1975-1986, are centered on James Summerville (1947- ), author and consultant. The James Summerville Papers were donated to the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mr. Summerville.

Materials in this collection measure .84 cubic feet.

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the James Summerville Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The James Summerville (James Melvin Smith) Papers, containing approximately 600 items, span the period 1975-1986. The collection is composed of an advertisement, an application, clippings, consultant agreements, a copyright, correspondence, an epitaph, notes, photographs, drawings, etc., a press release, publications, reports, a sketch, a speech, and a typescript.

The bulk of the collection is comprised of the typescript of the Centennial history *Educating Black Doctors: A History of Meharry Medical College* written by James Summerville, author and consultant. Born James Melvin Smith (he assumed surname of Summerville in 1978), Summerville was born in Nashville in 1947. Summerville received his early education within the Dickson County School system, graduating from high school in 1965. He then obtained his Bachelor's degree in English from the University of Tennessee in 1969. In addition, Summerville also attained Master's degrees in English and History from the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa and Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.

The typescript within the collection is arranged as carefully and accurately as possible, in the order of the published manuscript, including literary notes and bibliography. *Educating Black Doctors* details the genesis of Meharry Medical College, from its founding in 1876 to its Centennial celebration in 1976. Various medical and social issues pertinent to the creation and maintenance of medical institutions are also covered in the book. Moreover, Summerville's treatment of this chapter of history serves as an interesting and informative reference into early African-American medical education and its applications and transformations in the South.

The correspondence, also comprising a major portion of the collection, mainly consists of communication between Summerville and Malcolm MacDonald, Director of the University of Alabama Press and between other associates affiliated with the publisher. Much of the correspondence written by Summerville is addressed to formidable organizations, sent in hopes of procuring a donor to cover publication fees. Several letters express Summerville's dejection and disappointment over the lack of acclaim his book received. Also among the correspondence is a letter from motion picture director Delbert Mann. It needs noting that correspondence sent by Summerville prior to 1978, is signed as James Melvin Smith.

Within the photographs, drawings, etc. section of the collection are several photographs of faculty, staff, and students of Meharry Medical College, including one of co-founder George Whipple Hubbard.

The James Summerville Papers offer much to the researcher exploring post-Civil War medical conditions in Nashville and the dire need at that time for adequate medical education and treatment for its African-American citizens. This need still exists today and continues to be met by Meharry Medical College.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

### James (Melvin Smith) Summerville

- 1947                      October 27 – Born in Nashville, Tennessee, the son of Melvin and Alice Jane (Haygood) Smith
- 1952-1965              Educated within the Dickson County School System
- 1965-1969              Attended and graduated from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee with a Bachelor of Science degree in English
- 1972                      Obtained Master's degree in English from the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa
- 1983                      Received Master's degree in History from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. *Educating Black Doctors: A History of Meharry Medical College* published
- 1984 – Present        Working as consultant and author in Nashville, Tennessee

**Sources:** James Summerville  
James Summerville (James Melvin Smith) Papers

## CONTAINER LIST

### **Box 1**

1. Advertisement – *Half The Black Doctors...*, 1980
2. Applications – Consumer Loan – Summerville (Smith) James Melvin, 1981
3. Clippings – “Black Pulse,” 1986
4. Clippings – Congressional Record – “Meharry Medical School Deserves U. S. Support,” October 25, 1977
5. Clippings – “Meharry Access Request Remains Unanswered,” March 11, 1984
6. Clippings – Reviews – *Educating Black Doctors...*, April 26, 1984
7. Consultant Agreement – Smith (Summerville), James
8. Copyrights – U. S. – Summerville, James, July 7, 1982
9. Correspondence – Allen, William H. - Falk, Leslie A.
10. Correspondence – Faulk, Odie B. - Majors, William R.
11. Correspondence – Mann, Delbert
12. Correspondence – May, Elizabeth - Smith (Summerville), James
13. Correspondence – Snead, M. Page - Summerville (Smith), Jim
14. Correspondence – Taylor, Rubye F. - Young, Noel
15. Epitaphs, -- Freeman, James Midwinter
16. Notes – *Educating Black Doctors...*
17. Photographs, drawings, etc. – Meharry Medical College, 1876-1976
18. Press releases – Summerville, James – The Tennessee Heritage News Service, n. d.
19. Publications – Booklet – *The Southern Historical Association*, November 9-12, 1983
20. Publications – Bulletin – “Afro-American Culture and History,” February 12, 1986
21. Publications – Documents – “Permission to Credit” Forms – Anderson - Walker
22. Publications – Pamphlet – *Educating Black Doctors...*
23. Publications – Pamphlet – The University of Alabama Press, Fall/Winter 1983-1984
24. Reports – Sales and Royalty – *Educating Black Doctors...* 1984, 1986
25. Sketches – General – Summary of *Educating Black Doctors...*
26. Speeches, addresses, etc. – Summerville, James – “Meharry Medical College and the Movement Years,” February 12, 1986

### **Box 2 Typescripts**

1. Draft – *Black Medical History*, December 2, 1975
2. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Dedication thru Preface
3. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Chapter 1
4. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Chapter 2
5. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Chapter 3
6. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Chapter 4
7. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Chapter 5
8. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Chapter 6

9. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Chapter 7
10. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Chapter 8
11. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Notes to Chapter 1
12. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Notes to Chapter 2
13. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Notes to Chapter 3
14. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Notes to Chapter 4
15. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Notes to Chapter 5
16. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Notes to Chapter 6
17. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Notes to Chapter 7
18. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Notes to Chapter 8
19. *Educating Black Doctors...*, Works cited (Partial listings)